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Training and Education

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Participation In Meetings Of Professional Societies

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This Supplement supersedes Southern Region ROML S-5-96 issued May 23, 2002 and filed with WSOM Chapter I-01. The primary change from policies contained in the previous ROML is:

Approval authority (signature) for all travel authorizations associated with attendance at scientific meetings and conferences must be obtained from Southern Region Headquarters (SRH) prior to participation.

Funding for employees actively participating in scientific or technical conference will come from SRH. Local funds will not be used.

Signed by

December 13, 2005

X. William Proenza

Date

Director, Southern Region

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1. Introduction. Southern Region employees are encouraged to participate in meetings and conferences of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), the National Weather Association (NWA), and similar organizations as a means for exchanging information, ideas and knowledge. Many employees serve on boards and committees, and many more participate by sharing results of their local studies or applied research through papers and posters at meetings. Such activities have obvious benefits for both individuals and the National Weather Service (NWS). Participation furthers an employee's professional development, and it can help ensure the National Weather Service remains at the forefront of science and technology applications. Supervisors should adopt a resourceful policy in permitting employees to actively participate.

To the extent possible, Southern Region will provide support for travel and other costs associated with participation in meetings of the professional societies, including publication costs for papers in preprint volumes and more formal (reviewed) journal publications. Expenses incurred as a result of participating in such meetings and conferences are treated as travel expenses and are defined in the NOAA Travel Handbook. The purpose of this supplement is to define related regional policies.

2. Authorization for participation in scientific conferences. Organizers of scientific and technical conferences generally issue "A Call for Papers" months prior to a conference. Employees should deal directly with conference organizers or session chairpersons when submitting abstracts to be considered for inclusion. (SRS 08-05 describes payment of an abstract submission fee, if any.) ***Copies of abstracts must also be forwarded to the Scientific Services Division (SSD) at SRH.*** It should be understood that even if an individual is invited by the organizers to participate, submitting an abstract or taking other action to become involved in a conference typically occurs months before the actual date of the meeting. Abstracts may or may not be accepted for presentation. This means it is difficult to forecast well in advance (and budget for) what the level of participation by employees may be at conferences. As a result, there can be no guarantee funds will be available to support participation by all who may wish to be involved. Nevertheless, every effort will be made to provide the support necessary.

Southern Region employees must obtain authorization from SRH prior to participating in scientific conferences and related meetings. This requirement is necessitated because regional funding may be involved (see Section 3), and special regulations regarding group travel may also be involved. To obtain the necessary authorization, *all travel authorizations associated with participation in such meetings*

must be signed by the SRH Deputy Director or his designee. When a travel authorization is submitted for approval it should be accompanied by a clear description of the nature of the individual's involvement.

3. Funding for participation. Employees attending scientific conferences for the purpose of presenting papers or posters, serving on committees or panels, chairing sessions, or receiving awards will be considered to be *actively* involved in the meeting. Otherwise, for the purposes of the following sections of this supplement, it will be assumed the employee is attending the conference for *training*.

The following policies will generally apply in regard to support for participation in scientific or technical conferences. Section 4 deals specifically with registration fees.

- a) Funds permitting, the Regional Director will provide support for travel, lodging, per diem, and registration costs for individuals who are *actively* participating.
- b) It may be necessary for the Regional Director to restrict support to only one such meeting per fiscal year, per individual, in which case the local office funds must be used for any support provided to an individual for attending more than one meeting during a given fiscal year.
- c) If a responsible individual at the Southern Region or NWS Headquarters, or another office/agency, requests or directs an individual (through his or her supervisor) to participate in such a meeting, then it will be assumed the requesting official will be responsible for funding that individual's participation. That understanding should be made clear at the time the direction is given.
- d) If an individual is attending such a meeting in *training* status (that is, not presenting a paper or otherwise actively participating), then it is assumed his or her supervisor will provide support in the same manner as for other training activities not funded regionally or nationally. (Note that employees may also be permitted to attend conferences on official time, but at their own expense, as allowed by applicable federal travel regulations.)

Possible exceptions to the above general policies must be discussed by supervisors with the Regional Director or the Deputy Director well in advance of the conference.

3.1 Charge codes. Assuming funds for participation in a scientific conference are *not* being provided by an entity other than the Southern Region, then the *organization code* used for all costs associated with participation will be that code which designates the traveler's official duty location. The *task code* to be used will depend on whether costs are to be charged to the MIC, HIC or division chief's allocated funds, or to the Regional Director's funds (see paragraph [a] above). A *phase code* may also be designated to further classify the source of funds. These codes will be provided each year by the SRH Administrative Management Division.

If funds for participation are to be provided by a Weather Service Headquarters office or other entity, then follow instructions provided by that organization.

4. Registration fees.

4.1 Registration Fee paid in advance. The registration fee should be paid in advance, using the government purchase card using local funds. The accounting codes will be those given above in Section 3.

4.2 Registration Fee paid at time of meeting. The registration fee should be paid in advance, using the government purchase card. In certain cases, this is not possible and the registration fee must be paid at the time of attendance. When this is the case, the payment should be made by cash, or personal funds (personal check or personal credit card). *The registration fee should not be paid for with the government travel card.* The employee will be reimbursed when the travel voucher is filed. To be reimbursed, the registration fee must be noted on the travel authorization, and the expense should be claimed on the travel voucher. Participants should ensure that a receipt is obtained to show payment of any registration fee.

If personal funds are used, submit form SF1164 in Travel Manager, using Local Voucher. The SF1164 should be submitted in addition to the usual travel voucher.